

range finding means for finding distance, said range finding means being carried within said housing and oriented so that said range finding means directs a beam of light through said window;

means for moving said range finding means parallel to said window;

means carried by said housing for gripping said housing;

tire-engaging means carried by said proximal end for engaging a side of a tire; and

means carried by said housing and in operational connection with said range finding

means and said moving means for sending distance data from said range finding means as said

range finding means is moved parallel to said window.—

— 8. (Amended) A probe for measuring tread depth, said probe comprising:

a housing having a window formed therein, said housing having a proximal end and a distal end;

range finding means for finding distance, said range finding means being carried within said housing and oriented so that said range finder directs a beam of light through said window;

means for moving said range finding means parallel to said window;

a handle carried by said proximal end of said housing; and

means carried by said housing and in operational connection with said range finding means and said moving means for sending distance data from said range finding means as said range finding means is moved parallel to said window.; and

communications port means carried by said handle for communicating distance data to a computer.—

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-- 15. (Amended) A method for measuring the tread profile of a tire, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a handheld probe having means for engaging a rolling face and a side of a tire;

placing a handheld probe in engagement with said rolling face and said side of a tire;

scanning said rolling face with said probe to determine the tread profile;

communicating said tread profile to a computer having a display; and

plotting the tread profile on said display.—

Please add the following new claims:

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-- 21. (New) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said method further comprises the step of providing a probe having a handle, said handle having a communications port that communicates said tread profile to said computer.—

-- 22. (New) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said communicating step further comprises the step of transmitting said tread profile using infrared light.—

-- 23. (New) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said communicating step further comprises the step of transmitting said tread profile using radio frequency electromagnetic waves.—

-- 24. (New) The method as recited in claim 15, wherein said scanning step further comprises the step of using a handheld probe for scanning said rolling face of said tire.—